



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of New Hampshire*

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603/225-1552

MEDIA RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
January 20, 2004**

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**NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND
HIGH INTENSITY DRUG TRAFFICKING AREA ("HIDTA") TASK FORCE**

6th DEFENDANT SENTENCED IN SALEM MARIJUANA RING CASE

Re: United States v. Jason Messina

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono, Drug Enforcement Administration Resident Agent in Charge Leo Ducey, and Salem Police Chief Paul Donovan announced that **Jason J. MESSINA**, date of birth of June 28, 1980, of Methuen, Massachusetts, was sentenced today on federal marijuana distribution charges.

On September 22, 2003, Messina entered a guilty plea before U.S. District Judge Steven J. McAuliffe to an information charging him with possession with intent to distribute over 1000 kilograms of marijuana. At today's sentencing, Judge McAuliffe sentenced Messina to 70 months (5 years, 10 months) imprisonment and a \$4,000 fine, as well as a 5-year period of supervised release during which Messina's behavior will be monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation.

Messina was arrested in November, 2002 along with seven others as part of a sting operation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration's Northern New England High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area ("New England HIDTA") Task Force and the Salem Police Department. A Criminal Complaint against these individuals, issued by U.S. Magistrate Judge James R. Muirhead on January 22, 2003, alleged that they participated in a conspiracy to multiple kilos of marijuana in southeastern New Hampshire and northeastern Massachusetts between January, 2000 and November, 2002.

Messina is the sixth of the eight to be sentenced. Co-defendants **James SPITALERE** and **Jose L. MADERA**, of Methuen, Massachusetts, **Sean BOYD** and **James CLARK**, of

Haverhill, Massachusetts and **Arthur SOBERON**, of Salem, New Hampshire have already been sentenced.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated, “This multi-defendant case involving interstate marijuana trafficking is a prime example of the effectiveness of New England HIDTA, and the Northern New England HIDTA Task Force. I will continue to commit federal resources to these and other cooperative efforts between federal and local law enforcement agencies.”

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorney Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (“New England OCDEF”).